CWEC Fact Sheet on: June, 1988

THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUDGET

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prepared by the Citywide Educational Coalition
in cooperation with the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce

Q. HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO RUN BOSTON'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

A. For 1987-1988, the BPS spent about **$370.4M**:

$325.9M	in city funds - the "operating budget" - from property taxes. About one-third of the operating budget is reimbursed to the city by state and federal agencies.
+ 44.5M	in "external funds," state and federal money that *must* be spent on specific programs: remedial reading & math, school lunches, etc.
$370.4M	Total

Q. HOW IS THE MONEY SPENT?

A. The $325.9M operating budget paid the salaries, supplies & other costs for:

regular education	$100.1M
special education	65.9M
pensions, benefits	24.9M
school administration: principals, ass'ts, sec'ys	20.6M
transportation	18.2M
support: nurses, guidance, coaches, librarians., etc.	16.1M
bilingual education	16.0M
miscellaneous	11.6M
utilities	10.9M
custodians	10.5M
repairs, repair contracts, administration, etc.	10.9M
central administration	8.9M
vocational education	3.8M
district administration	.8M
reserved for emergencies	6.7M
	$325.9M

* In 1983, the operating budget was $224.5M for 55,759 students. This year, it was $325.9M for 56,169 students. For 1988-89, BPS will get $350M.
* More than 80% of the budget is spent on salaries & benefits, agreed to in contracts.
* Most employees got 5.5% raises in their latest contracts. Teachers got 6.5%, the extra 1% funded by the state.
* 1987-88 was year three of a five year plan for major school repairs, funded by $147M in city money.
* Voc. ed. students numbered about 600, costing $6,400 per pupil per year.
* The "reserve" does not last long; most is spent before school opens.

Q. WHAT IS THE PER PUPIL COST?

A. If you divide the operating budget by the total student enrollment, you get:
$325.9M ÷ 56,169 students = $5,802 per student per year.
If you add the external funds, you get an even higher per pupil cost:
$370.4M ÷ 56,169 students = $6,594 per student per year.
But you get a more accurate per pupil cost if you consider the kind of program each student is in:

For students in:	BPS $	+ External $	=	per pupil cost	# in BPS:
regular education classes	$4,663	+ $811	=	$5,474/pupil	37,238 students
bilingual education classes	$5,161	+ $714	=	$5,875/pupil	7,722 students
part-time special ed programs	$5,768	+ $783	=	$6,551/pupil	6,947 students
full-time special ed programs	$10,030	+ $712	=	$10,742/pupil	4,262 students
special ed programs in private schools	$25,670	+ $360	=	$26,030/pupil	890 students

Q. HOW IS EACH SCHOOL'S BUDGET DEVELOPED? WHO DECIDES HOW IT IS SPENT?

A. A school's budget is calculated by the central office. Staff and supplies' funds are figured by formula: the number of administrators, teachers and support staff is based on student enrollment. Supplies are budgeted at $81-$86/student, including an average of $8/student for xerox leasing costs, but have been cut next year to $55-$71/student.

Principals have little say over how their school's budget is spent. They can sometimes "trade" one administrator for another, an assistant principal for an extra guidance counselor, for example. Elementary school principals can decide how to spend *some* of the money set aside for supplies. In middle and high schools, the principal also has control over what electives the school offers - replacing a music teacher with a computer teacher, for example - but cannot get *more* teachers.

A school's budget *does not* include funds for repairs. For even minor problems - replacing a broken window - a principal must submit a request to the central office who then hires a private contractor.

Q. WHAT DOES A TYPICAL SCHOOL COST?

A. There is no "typical" BPS school: each varies in size, enrollment and needs. But a "composite" school, drawn from the real budgets of several middle schools, might have:

500 students in grades 6-8
A staff including:
- 1 principal
- 1 asst. principal
- 1 Director of Instruction
- 22 regular education teachers
- 1 Instructional Support Teacher
- 7 special needs teachers
- 1 special needs coordinator
- 5 bilingual teachers
- 1 guidance counselor
- 5 specialists (gym, art, shop, etc.)
- 5 special needs or bilingual aides
- 1 librarian
- 5 custodians
- 1 secretary
- 1 bus monitor
- ½ time nurse

And costs of $1.8M for:

salaries	$1,768,960
supplies (books, workbooks, paper, xerox leasing, etc.)	$31,000

The central office pays the school's bills for:

heat	$35,000*
electricity	30,000*
telephones (2)	3,150*

(*figures approximate)

The BPS spent @ $2.84M on routine and emergency repairs this year. A recent study says the BPS should spend at least $13M/year on repairs.

Q. HOW MUCH MONEY DOES BOSTON GET FROM CHAPTER 188?

A. This school year, the BPS received $7.7M from the state's Education Reform Bill. Of that, more than $5.1M went to the BPS for "unrestricted funds." School Improvement Grants - $10/student, about $.6M in all - were given directly to the schools to spend as *they* (staff and parents) decided.

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